

The benefits of Behavioral HealthChoices

A message from Jim Leonard, CEO, Magellan Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania, Inc.

In Harrisburg, Senate Bill 268 (SB 268) and House Bill 335 (HB 335) call for the elimination of the Behavioral Health Carve-out, known as Behavioral HealthChoices (BHC). Magellan leadership has reviewed SB 268 and HB 335, and strongly opposes these bills. Carving behavioral health services into physical health managed care does not translate into better health outcomes and it will not save taxpayers' dollars in the short or long run.

As a Behavioral Health Managed Care Organization (BH-MCO), that maintains a strong presence within our communities we serve, we have worked closely with our county partners and the Department of Human Services since the inception of BHC in 1997 to improve access and the quality of behavioral health services. Collectively we should take pride in BHC's mission-focused philosophy that demands a collaborative, coordinated and consistent service delivery model for our Members. I witness this each and every day, and most appreciate the intricate levels of support that are vital for Members with complex challenges. SB 268 and HB 335 are threats to these day-to-day needed services.

With all of our Members in mind, it is critically important that we remain focused on our following objectives:

- To further develop and refine value-based reimbursement models.
- To continue our integrated health initiatives focusing on whole health and provider communication.
- To create additional solutions to address the opioid epidemic.
- To support transition-age youth and young adults.
- To ensure that reinvestment expenditures go to the highest need in our counties.



Key benefits of Behavioral HealthChoices

We need to remember that BHC was created 22 years ago because Members were not receiving adequate levels of care under the fee-for-service model. Since the creation of this nationally recognized program, BHC has continued to produce efficient, affordable and innovative solutions for Members and their families. Here are several key benefits of BHC:

- Local control is the cornerstone of the program as the counties partner with law enforcement, the court system, schools and local hospitals to create integrated solutions.
- Counties develop programs and services to meet the needs of diverse local communities.
- Members consistently submit high satisfaction surveys.
- Accountability and transparency with local elected officials and local stakeholders.
- Cost savings through reinvestment funding.

- Increased access to care, improved services use rates, improved quality, and expansion of the continuum of care in alignment with evidence-based models and recovery and resiliency principles.

Outreach opportunities for providers and local stakeholders

We encourage all providers and stakeholders to get engaged in the advocacy around this issue and express your support of BHC to maintain the Behavioral Health Carve-out. Here are two important outreach opportunities to consider:

- Contact your local [State Representative](#) or [State Senator](#) and share your personal stories of support.
- RCPA recently asked providers and stakeholders to write letters to the editor to oppose SB 268 and HB 335. For convenience, RCPA drafted [sample letters to the editor](#) that you can personalize and express how BHC has helped Members in your community.